

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Dear School-age Child Care Provider:

Enclosed is a copy of revised licensing policies and procedures for regulating school-age child care programs in California. The Community Care Licensing Division began implementing these revisions effective June 1, 2001.

These changes are the result of our school-age survey, a series of school-age focus group discussions that licensing staff conducted throughout the state in 1999, and two meetings held in February 2001 with many of the individuals who participated in the focus groups. The changes recognize the need for flexibility in approach to regulating child care of older children without a reduction in health and safety standards. They recognize that licensed care arrangements for older children are often conducted at locations where license exempt care arrangements are also provided, or at sites where earlier or later in the day, the same children are attending school. Some of these changes also will be incorporated into regulations. Until the regulations are amended, the following changes can be implemented by centers once they have received approval for a waiver from their local licensing office:

- Allow increased teacher-child ratios by 15 percent during transition periods when school-age children enter or exit a licensed school-age program.
- Permit the use of a buddy system for older children to go to the restroom.
- Permit the use of an aide who is at least 18 years old, in place of a teacher, anytime school-age children are transported.
- Permit shared use of indoor activity space when there is no physical means of separating space.

After the regulations are issued, waivers may no longer be necessary. We expect the hearings for any regulations to be held in the Spring of 2002.

The following changes do not require the issuance of a waiver pending the development of regulations, but do require revision of the facility plan of operation:

- Allow a licensed child care program director to also be the director of a license exempt program.

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- Permit shared use of indoor activity space when separation is achieved by use of a wall or four-foot partition.
- Permit shared use of outdoor activity space for planned activities.

We have not yet fully addressed the complex issues dealing with monitoring of playgrounds for school-age programs located on school sites. We did receive a large number of comments in this area during previous focus groups. We have been working with child care providers and playground safety experts on a report to the Legislature on playground safety requirements for child care centers which is required by SB 1619 (Chapter 550/Statutes of 2000). The work group is expected to provide guidance related to playground safety for all child care arrangements. Upon review of this report, we expect to issue revised playground policies and procedures no later than December 2001.

Licensing field staff received training on the attached policies and procedures in May 2001. If you are interested in implementing any of the changes to your program, please contact your licensing analyst.

Sincerely,

MARTHA LOPEZ
Deputy Director
Community Care Licensing Division

Enclosures